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FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF TUNAS

The International Tuna Fishers Conference on Responsible Fisheries and the 3rd International Fishers Forum in Yokohama

--All Stakeholders, including tuna fishers, government officials, researchers,
and environmental NGOs, will participate--

The International Tuna Fishers Conference on Responsible Fisheries and the Third International Fishers Forum (IFF3) are scheduled to convene jointly on July 25-29 at the Inter-Continental Grand Yokohama Hotel, in Yokohama, Japan.

Both meetings are co-hosted by the Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries (OPRT) and the U.S. Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC). This meeting will have the participation of tuna fishers from the Pacific-rim area, centering on Asia, and views will be exchanged on various issues that are important to tuna fisheries, such as, excessive fishing capacity, illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing activities, bycatch, and tuna farming.

IFF has previously hosted two biennial conferences--one in New Zealand and the other in Hawaii--to discuss mainly the issues of bycatch of marine turtles and seabirds. The upcoming third meeting will expand its agenda to cover all areas

of responsible tuna fisheries. It will aim to identify effective approaches to ensure that tuna fisheries are sustainable and use responsible practices. This goal recognizes the worldwide nutritional, economic, social, environmental and cultural importance of fisheries.

OPRT President Isao Nakasu said: "We do hope that the efforts of longline tuna fishers to practice responsible fisheries operations will be made clear both in Japan and overseas through this Conference. We also hope this Conference will provide a forum to allow fishers to examine and discuss a number of important issues, such as bycatch."

Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director of the WPRFMC, called for participation from as many countries as possible, emphasizing that "it is vital to have participation of tuna fishers, especially from Asia. I look forward to having the fishers themselves make clear their commitment to responsible fishing at this meeting."

Interview with Ms. Kitty M. Simonds

OPRT asked Ms Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director of the WPRFMC, about the aim of IFF3 during her visit to Japan on May 16 for an exchange of views on the arrangements for the International Tuna Fishers Conference on Responsible Fisheries and IFF3.

QUESTION: What is IFF?

SIMONDS: IFF was established as a forum to discuss how fishers can prevent bycatch in the wake of growing public attention to the bycatch of seabirds and marine turtles in tuna longlining.

QUESTION: What will be the major themes of IFF3?

SIMONDS: This time we put forth the concept of responsible tuna fisheries for the first time. Through



this meeting, we hope to motivate tuna fishers to recognize and discuss all the issues surrounding their fisheries including bycatch. We hope to make this meeting a forum that will determine the best way tuna fishers can handle these issues in the future. We would like to convey to the general public what fishers--not only tuna fishers--think of the issues. In

this respect, it is truly significant that this meeting will be held in Japan, the country that has the world's largest sashimi tuna market. The participation of OPRT as co-hosts is also significant because it is an industry

organization whose members are the major Asian tuna fishing countries. The U.S. government is also positively supporting the efforts to make this meeting a success.

QUESTION: What do you think of the issue of overcapacity in tuna fishing?

SIMONDS: I think the issue of overcapacity differs from country to country. Some developing countries wish to expand their tuna fishing while some advanced

fishing nations face the need to reduce the number of their fishing vessels. How to adjust these difference is a very difficult issue. We are faced with a mountain of issues, such as one relating to FADs and the issue of small-size bigeye tuna bycatch by purse-seiners. Fishers will seriously tackle those issues at IFF3. Along with Japan that is hosting this meeting, the United States will call for further efforts in realizing responsible tuna fisheries.

Special Feature

Grave Concern over Unrestricted Expansion of Large Scale Purse-seining

--OPRT Resolution Adopted--

OPRT adopted the Resolution for Restriction of Large Scale Tuna Purse Seine Fishing Capacity at its General Meeting held in Tokyo on May 26,2005. The Resolution reflects a serious concern of the OPRT members about the decline of tuna resources as well as the hardships that may be inflicted on them as a result of increasing large scale tuna fisheries. Given below is the full text of the Resolution.

OPRT Resolution on Restriction of Large Scale Tuna Purse Seine Fishing Capacity

The OPRT with membership of organizations or enterprises engaged in production, trade, distribution and consumption of sashimi tunas throughout the world,

Noting that the objectives of the OPRT is to promote responsible tuna longline fisheries as well as sustainable use of the world tuna resources,

Being concerned that the related tuna resources have been over-exploited and declined on a global basis over the years,

Recognizing that the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is in its objective and principles of the “International Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity” calling for States and regional fisheries organizations confronted with an over-capacity problem, where capacity is undermining achievement of long-term sustainability outcomes, should endeavorto limit at present level and progressively reduce the fishing capacity applied to affected fisheries,

Recalling that the World Tuna Longline Fishery Conference held in August, 2003 in Tokyo adopted the Joint Declaration and the participants in that declaration agree to take effective measures respectively and

jointly to restrict tuna longline fishing capacity on a global and sustainable basis and at the same time, to express concern over the rapidly increasing number and capacity of large-scale tuna purse seine fishing vessels (For the text of the Joint Declaration, see OPRT website at <http://www.oprt.or.jp>)

Recognizing that related tuna longline fishing industries under the OPRT have been in response to this call of the conference or substantially before this call striving to address the issue of an over-capacity problem by undertaking various scheme such as fleet reduction scheme or positive listing scheme while large-scale tuna purse seine fisheries have been continuing to increase number and capacity of their vessels,

Taking into account that large-scale tuna purse seine fishing industries particularly in the Central and Western Pacific have been further accelerating an over-capacity of their fleet not only by increasing the number, size and efficiency of the vessels but also by promoting operation under the flag of convenience despite the two resolutions adopted in the region both in 1999 and 2003 calling for a restriction of fishing efforts as well as fishing capacity over tunas from the concerns over their serious resource conditions,

Expressing grave concern that such limitless expansion of large-scale tuna purse seine fishing fleets together with the fact that those purse seine fisheries catch a large amount of juvenile tunas, could adversely affect the sustainability of tuna longline fisheries which share the world tuna resources with those tuna purse seine fisheries in the fishing grounds over the world,

RESOLVES TO URGE THE FOLLOWINGS:

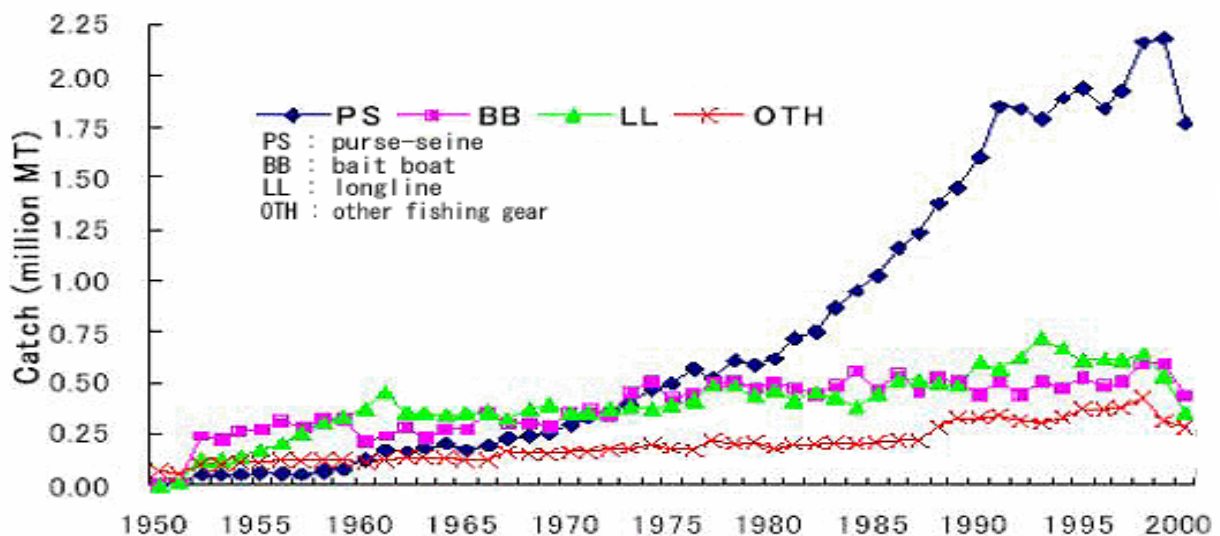
- 1. UN FAO, related regional tuna fisheries management organizations, related national fisheries authorities and related large-scale tuna purse seine fishing industries should**

ensure that mechanism to regulate and restrict number and capacity of large-scale tuna purse seine fishing vessels would be worked out on a global and sustainable basis

2. Particularly in the Central and Western Pacific where urgent measures are needed due to a rapid and predominant increase in number as well as capacity of large-scale tuna purse-seine fishing vessels over the past several years, the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific (WCPFC) should take immediate actions to ensure reduction of number and capacity of large-scale tuna purse seine fishing vessels in the region.
3. Related regional tuna fisheries management organizations as well as related national fisheries authorities should promote cooperation and coordination among those organizations so that transference of excessive purse seine fishing capacity over tunas would be avoided.

(Note) This resolution would not deny a special recognition to be given to the differences between regions as well as the requirements of developing industries when regulation and restriction in number and capacity of large scale tuna purse seine fishing vessels would be discussed and implemented on a global or regional basis.

World catch of major tunas by gear (million tons)



Recovery of tuna resources unlikely in the absence of control of large scale purse-seine fisheries.

--Discussion among OPRT members on the Resolution--

OPRT's Resolution on the Restriction of Large-Scale Tuna Purse Seine Fishing Capacity was proposed at the initiative of Mr. Masahiro Ishikawa, President, Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Associations. Mr. Ishikawa said: "There will be no recovery of tuna resources unless steps are taken to reduce and restrict the fishing capacity of purse-seine fisheries. All members of OPRT, including distributors, should unite to call on the purse-seine tuna fishing industry to curtail and restrain their fishing capacity."

To the proposed restriction, China Fisheries Association (Distant Water Fisheries Branch) expressed its position "to agree with it in principle," but also said that "regional differences and the situation of developing countries need to be taken into consideration."

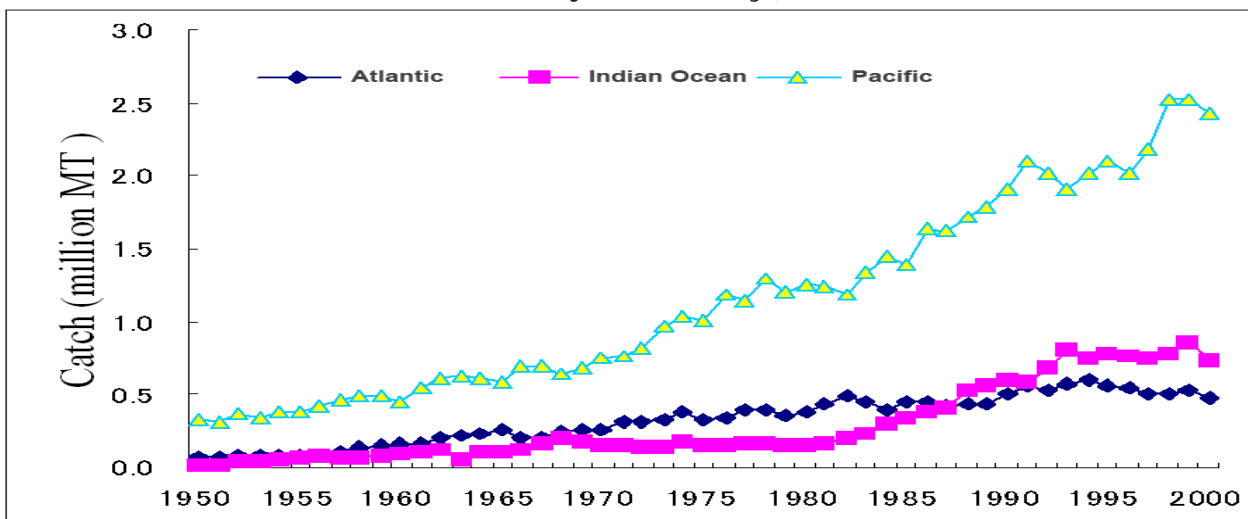
The representative from Korea strongly supported the proposal. He stressed that "Korea is carrying out 80% of its operation in the eastern Pacific and is now facing a severe situation resulting from decreasing catches. In this circumstance, it is a serious problem that purse-seine fisheries are rendering the all-out conservation efforts of longliners null and void."

The Chinese proposal was added as a footnote to the adopted Resolution.

(Source: National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries))

(Catch by purse-seine fishing saw a rapid increase from around 1980.)

World catch of major tunas by three oceans



(Source: National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries) (Catch in the Pacific where no regulations existed increased sharply.)

Tuna Fishers Protest to Overexploitation of Tunas in the Pacific

The resolution, adopted during the rally of tuna fishers on July 15, 2004, called for, among other things,

- (1) no further increase in the number of fishing vessels for big fishing nations until appropriate management measures for skipjack and other tunas are taken by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission; and
- (2) the implementation of a fishing vessel reduction program by fishing nations and fishing entities that have conspicuously expanded their fishing capacity in the Convention area in recent years in contravention of the recommendations of regional fisheries management organizations and the UN FAO's International Plan of Action on Capacity.

Decline in bigeye tuna catch by tuna longline fishing vessels in the Pacific



Source: Landed volume statistics of Kesenuma Fish Market

OPRT Members (as of the end of March 2005)

<Producers>

	No. of fishing vessels
Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Associations	377
Japan Tuna Fisheries Association	
National Ocean Tuna Fishery Associations (Japan)	34
National Offshore Tuna Fisheries Association (Japan)	23
Taiwan Deep Sea Tuna Boat Owners and Exporters Association	600
Korea Deep Sea Fisheries Association (Tuna Long-Line Fisheries Committee)	172
OPRT Philippines, Inc.	18
Indonesia Tuna Association (ASTUIN)	14
China Fisheries Association (Distant Water Fisheries Branch)	113
Foundation for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries (Ecuador)	5
Legitimized FOC fishing vessels (Vanuatu and the Seychelles)	69
Total	1,425

<Traders and Distributors' Organizations>

- Japan Fish Traders Association
- All Japan Fish Wholesalers' Union of Central Wholesale Market
- National Federation of Middle Wholesaler's Association for Aquatic Products (All Japan Fish Brokers Union)
- All Japan Fish Retailers Union

<Consumer Organization>

- National Liaison Committee of Consumer's Organization

<Public interest corporations>

- Japan Fisheries Association
- Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation